

ABSTRACT

A stream of time-ordered data, such as a movie, is divided into multiple fragments of equal length, which are repetitively transmitted at different respective repetition rates. The fragments are reordered for transmission so that those which occur near the beginning of the original data stream are transmitted more frequently than those which occur later in the data stream. When a user enters a request to utilize the data, the individual fragments are stored upon receipt at the user's premises, and reassembled into a contiguous stream. The ordering of the fragments is such that the wait time required before utilization of the data can begin is limited to a predetermined maximum, and at least one copy of every fragment becomes available by the time it is needed.